



1910 – the classical nature conservation started in Estonia

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



- Vaika bird sanctuary was established on **August 14, 1910**. On the initiative of the local lighthouse keeper **Artur Toom**. The Riga Naturalists' Society leased the land.
- Vilsandi bird sanctuary is the first nature conservation area in the Baltic states



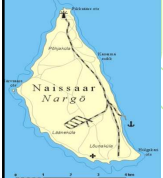
Artur Toom (1883-1943)
Vaika Linnukaitseala asutaja

Development of nature conservation in Estonia

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



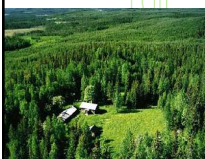
Period of narrow regulations restricting the use of nature resources (XII-XIX c)



- **1297** the **Danish King Erik Menved VI** issued a strict order to prohibit the cutting of coastal woods on four islands near Tallinn
- This is the first known Act at national level to establish nature conservation over a relatively large area in Estonia

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Period of narrow regulations restricting the use of nature resources (XII-XIX c)

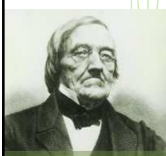
- **1664** The Swedish forest law was applied to the territory of Estonia - sustainable forest cutting, preservation of wild apple-trees, rowans, oaks and bird-cherries
- **1764**, a 50-fathom-wide protected forest zone was established along the Baltic coast.

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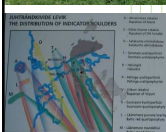
Period of the classical nature conservation without protected areas



- **1853.** Estonian Naturalists' Society (LUS), *Dorpater Naturforscher Gesellschaft* is established in Tartu
- **K.E. von Baer** – expeditions to Lake Peipsi and the Baltic Sea, need for protecting fish reserves, wrong methods of fishing. Together with biologically reasoned fishing rules
- **1859.** “Regulations for limiting fishing in Lake Peipsi and Lake Pskov”, Carl Alexander Schultz, **K.E. von Baer**

Development of nature conservation in Estonia

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- **1879 Gregor Helmersen** - presentation at the Estonian Naturalists' Society about large boulders that emphasised the need to protect them.
- Gregor Helmersen must be regarded as the initiator of the idea of nature conservation in Estonia as well as in the entire tsarist Russia.
- He referred to the **large boulders** in North Estonia as **geological monuments**

School text-books of Carl Robert Jakobson, late XIX c

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- Birds are the best friends of farmers
- “Land cultivation and forests must go hand in hand”. Water pollution must be avoided, flax retting pools must be dug
- Every farm must have a small park
- According to Jakobson, a homestead without greenery is like “a dish cooked without salt or a week without Sunday”
- All creatures in nature must be treated with respect
- All dams must have a fish ladder

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- **1918**, The Republic of Estonia
- **1920** the nature conservation section of the Estonian Naturalists' Society
- Protected areas: **1924** Harilaid (Saaremaa), Järvselja Strict Nature Reserve (Tartu region); **1925** Yew trees (*Taxus baccata*) island Hiiumaa, **1927** Bay of Linnulaht (Saaremaa), **1930** Abruksa broad-leaf forests

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T. Lippmaa



Gustav Vilbaste

Period of the State nature conservation started

- **1935** The first Nature Conservation Act of the Republic of Estonia entered into force on December 11. **National Nature Conservation Council** (chairman by prof T. Lippmaa) and **governing body of state parks** (head mag P. Päts) were established
- **1936 Nature Conservation Register** was founded. **G. Vilbaste**, the first state nature conservation inspector, network of Trustees of nature

Development of nature conservation in Estonia

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



- **1938** In connection with the entry into force of the new Constitution the 1935 Nature Conservation Act was replaced with the **new Nature Conservation Act**
- The new act covered the preservation and maintenance of public parks, gardens and squares and home decoration, but nothing fundamental changed in nature conservation
- Governing body of state parks was named the **Institute of Nature Conservation and Tourism** (director P. Päts)

Development of nature conservation in Estonia

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- By 1940 the register established in 1936 contained 549 entries for sites under nature conservation: of these, 238 were erratic boulders, 236 trees, 47 areas (15 for curative mud!), 26 species of flora and 2 springs.



Protected areas in 1940



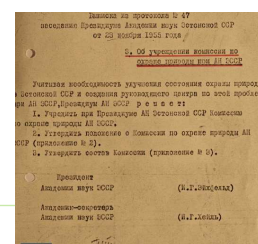
Nature Register

A new beginning of Nature Conservation

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



- 1951, the nature conservation section of the Estonian Naturalists' Society resumed its activities.
- 1955, the Academy of Sciences of the Estonian SSR established its Nature Conservation Committee that was led for a long time by prof acad. E. Kumari, prof E. Varep (v-c), prof. H. Trass



A new beginning of Nature Conservation

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- On June 7, **1957**, Nature Conservation Act of the Estonian SSR was adopted as a result of the groundwork laid by the Commission for Nature Conservation.
- The legal act was the first of its type in the Soviet Union.
- Immediately, the first new protected areas were created. 30 different nature conservation areas, of which 12 were protected already in the Republic of Estonia.

Development of Nature Protection in Estonia

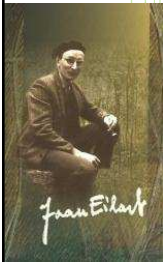
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



- This Act led to the formation of the Nature Conservation Authority (Looduskaitse Valitsus).
- **1966**, the state formed the Ministry of Forest Management and Nature Conservation (Minister H. Teder) that included the Nature Conservation Authority (led by H. Luik) as a nature conservation unit.

Nature conservation and public involment

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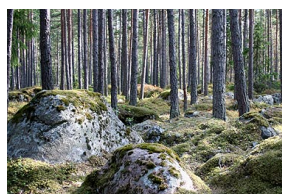
- In 1966, **Estonian Society of Nature Conservation**, a non-governmental organisation for protecting the nature and cultural heritage was founded on the initiative of **Jaan Eilart** and Edgar Tõnurist
- The society soon evolved into a popular nationwide organisation that during its heyday consisted of ten thousands of members

Lahemaa national park

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- **1971, Lahemaa National Park**, the first all-inclusive conservation area, was established for protecting landscapes, ecosystems, biodiversity and cultural heritage of North-Estonian landscapes
- The first national park in the entire Soviet Union



Development of nature conservation in Estonia

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



"War of Wetlands" in 1970s

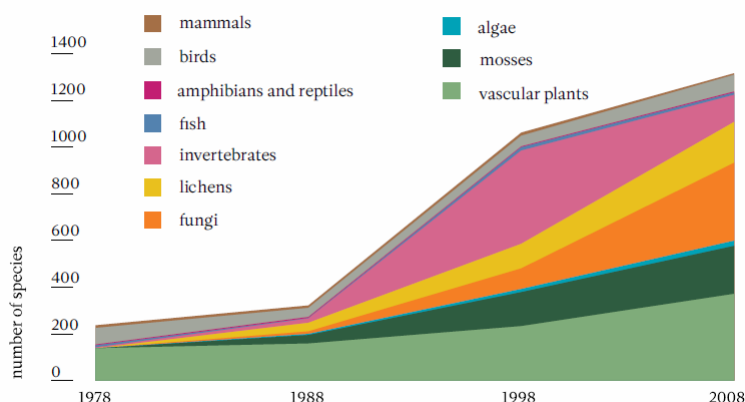
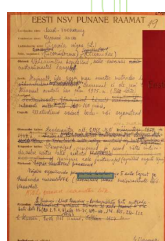
- In early 1970s, discussions about the environmental damage caused by large-scale drainage of wetlands started.
- One of the leaders of the discussions was **prof. Viktor Masing**, advocate of nature conservation, botanist and bio-geographer.
- As a result of the discussion that garnered wide attention, **93 wetlands** were excluded from the drainage fund in **1972**
- **28** new mire conservation areas were established in 1981
- Currently, different mire communities with an area of 175,000 ha are under protection in Estonia

Estonia's Red Book first published in 1979

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Number of threatened species in 1979-2008



Development of Nature Conservation since 1991

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On 20.08.1991, the Republic of Estonia is re-established.



- Continuity of the conservation areas: the areas put under protection during the Soviet era retained their protected status in the Republic of Estonia – **natural heritage was declared the top priority**.
- At this point, **1991**, the area of the territory under protection was **334,000 ha**.

Development of Nature Conservation since 1991

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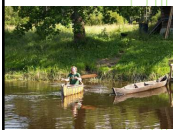
ELF



- In **1991**, the **Estonian Fund for Nature**, the national public nature conservation organisation, was established (a member of **IUCN**, partner to **WWF**)
- The fund plays an important role in launching specific nature conservation projects.

Development of Nature Conservation since 1991

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- In 1994, the fifth Estonian nature conservation act: **Protected Natural Objects Act** is adopted
- **Soomaa National Park** was established on the basis of Valgeraba, Ördi, Kuresoo ja Kikepera mire conservation areas (36,886 ha);
- **Karula National Park** was established on the basis of Karula landscape conservation area (11,043 ha);
- Vilsandi nature conservation area was renamed as **Vilsandi National Park** (23,760 ha)

Estonia and international Nature Conservation

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CBD



IUCN

- **1992**, the **CITES Convention** is ratified.
- **1993**, Estonia joins the **Bern Convention** and **Ramsar Convention** (12 sites today).
- **1994**, The Parliament of Estonia (Riigikogu) ratified the **Convention on Biological Diversity**
- **2007**, Estonia became a State member of **IUCN**

Habitat-based inventories

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Habitat-based inventories in the 1990s:

- Inventory of semi-natural biotic communities (coastal, floodplain and wooded meadows, and alvars)
- Inventories of forest communities
- Inventories of wetlands

As a result of the inventory of heritage landscapes, the destruction of semi-natural biotic communities due to the end of the management, i.e. mowing and grazing, was defined as one of the biggest threats to our biological diversity.

Maintenance of heritage landscapes

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- **2001**, a nationwide support to the maintenance of semi-natural biotic communities was launched by creating a system of nature conservation subsidies. 17,000 ha)
- **In 2001-2006**, the funds for performing the works were allocated from the budget of the Ministry of the Environment
- Since **2007**, nature conservation subsidies are paid within the framework of the Rural Development Plan via PRIA.
- Today, more than **20,000** ha of semi-natural biotic communities are under maintenance

Estonian nature conservation and the European Union

MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT



- From the mid-1990s, nature conservation in Estonia has been characterized by assumption of the **obligations of EU nature conservation**
- For the Natura 2000 network, the areas most suited for protecting 60 habitat types (sea, coast, forests, meadows, mires, inland water bodies, outcrops), 136 bird species as well as 51 plant and animal species had to be determined.
- 1. 05. 2004, the Republic of Estonia joins the European Union

Estonian nature conservation and European Union

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- Today the network of Natura 2000 consists of:
66 Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) with a total area of **12,590 km²** 531 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) with a total area of 11,320 km²
- Since most of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) overlap in part or in full, then total area of Natura 2000 areas is 14,590 km² (16,5%)

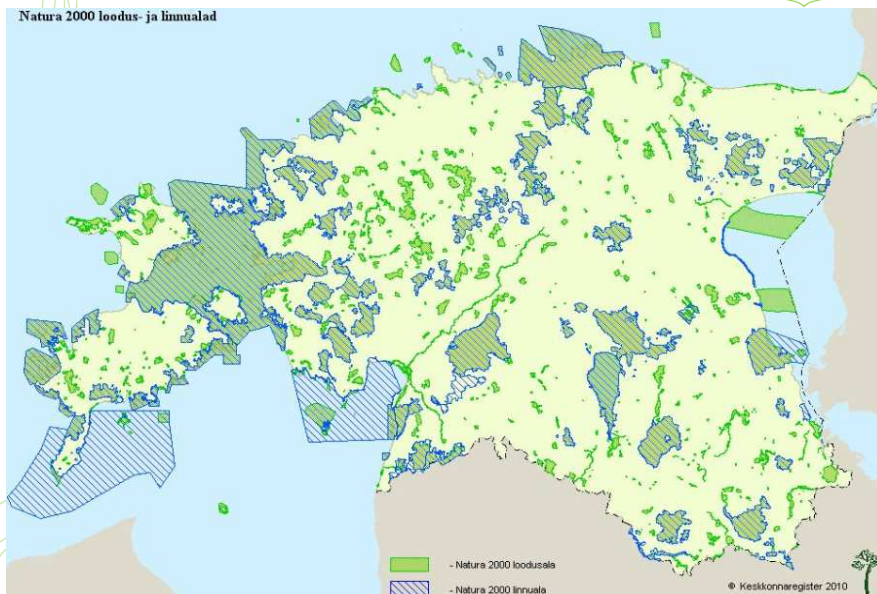
Sea	6,585 km ²
Land	7,177 km ²

Natura 2000 areas

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Natura 2000 loodus- ja linnualad



Development of nature conservation in Estonia

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10. 05. 2004, Nature Conservation Act enters into force
(Matsalu National park)

Today, **490,000** ha of Estonian land, ca **18%** of the territory of Estonia is under protection,
717,800 ha of the sea area is under protection

- 5 national parks
- 132 nature conservation areas
- 148 landscape conservation areas
- 118 conservation areas with non-renewed protection rules
- 343 limited conservation areas
- 1038 species protection site
- 544 protected parks and forest stands
- 1203 protected single objects of nature



Protected areas in Estonia

Map of protected areas

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